

THE OFFICE OF NEWARK/METROPOLITAN STUDIES

The formation of the Office of Newark Studies/Metropolitan Studies was announced jointly on February 10, 1971 by Mayor Kenneth Gibson and the Vice-President of Rutgers University for Newark, Malcolm Talbott. The primary purpose for the Office was to provide staff assistance and analysis of issues for the Mayor and city administration of Newark. The Office was supported by private grants until July 1978, and was administered through the Bureau of Community Services, a part of the University Extension Division of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. In operation, the Office functions as a research arm of Rutgers, Newark, and its Director reports to Dr. Raphael Caprio, Associate Dean, Newark College of Arts and Sciences, for purposes of program and policy. A small professional staff is complemented by graduate and undergraduate students and by consultants.

The origins of the Office of Newark/Metropolitan Studies are found in the period following the June 1970 Election of Mayor Gibson.

Recognizing the need for a more permanent vehicle to provide specialized and ongoing assistance to the city administration, officials and representatives of the Rutgers Bureau of Community Services recommended the establishment of a unit which could give objective and non-political advice.

The Rutgers proposal called for "an Office of Newark Studies to prepare analyses, studies, surveys, and recommendations directed toward improvement of Newark's municipal government."

The basic objectives of DNS are:

1. To broaden and strengthen the policy-making and staff capacity of local governments.
2. To involve universities-students and faculty--in the operations of city government and in the analysis of city problems.
3. To undertake special projects and studies, utilizing the resources of the university as well as consultant support as necessary and appropriate.
4. To establish a vehicle for non-public assistance to northern New Jersey Municipalities.

The Office of Newark Studies over the past eight years has maintained a close working relationship with Mayor Gibson and the city administration. In effect, this office represents a part of the array of staff upon which the Mayor can draw. In addition to the Office of the Mayor, the office has worked with the Corporation Counsel, Business Administrator, Finance Director, and Public Works Director.

Major Program Activities

Mortgage Lending

The Office of Newark Studies has completed an analysis of mortgage lending in Newark. This study was initiated by Mayor Gibson and was submitted to him February, 1976. One month later, Mayor Gibson convened a

meeting of the major lending institutions in Newark to discuss not only the results of the study but also, future plans of the lenders regrading local mortgage investments.

It was generally agreed that the lenders would assist the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration in the sale of properties which are part of the inventory of these agencies. Further, the lenders indicated their willingness to praticipate through financing, in any viable housing program presented to them.

Supermarket Study

ONS is coordinating a study which when completed will indicate whether Newark needs additional supermarkets. The study will indicate the potential buying power of City residents and the number of stores in selected parts of the City which can be supported; indicate the obstacles to establishing new supermarkets and what assistance the City can provide in removing them; and suggest new sites for supermarket location. Once the study is completed Mayor Gibson will host a meeting of selected supermarket executives to discuss the study results and to solicit their interest in locating in Newark.

Public Radio

ONS is worked with the Newark Board of Education in an effort to upgrade the operation of the Board's radio station, WBGO-FM. With a \$25,000 grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, ONS developed a plan for expansion of the station into a full-time, non-commercial, public radio station

that could provide local news, public affairs, cultural, educational and sports programming. As a result of a series of meetings with Board of Education members, school system administrative officials, and CPB officers the Board of Education resolved to transfer the license for WBGO to a new corporation, Newark Public Radio, Inc. which was jointly created by the Baord of Edcuation and ONS. This corporation is responsible for expanding the program activities of the radio station, which is now operative.

Television

ONS continues to provide staff assistance to the New Jersey Coalition for Fair Broadcasting. In July, 1976 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as part of a two-year old Rule Making initiated by the Coalition, concluded that New Jerseyans receive less than adequate news and public affairs VHF television service. Although the FCC rejected several Coalition proposals for rectifying this problem (such as reallocating stations to New Jersey), it did order the New York and Philadelphia television stations to submit plans for improving their New Jersey coverage.

Mayor's Task Force on Payments In-Lieu of Taxes

In July, 1976, ONS organized, at the Mayor's request, a task force which was given the assignment of developing a rational argument, a formula and a process whereby Newark might obtain payments in lieu of taxes from the City's significant amount of tax exempt property. The task force was composed of representatives from City government, the State Legislature, the business community and the religious-charitable community. ONS coordinated all staff

support to the task force. The results of this activity, was the enactment of Assembly Bill 930, (1977) Payment-In Lieu of Taxes for State owned properties. In 1978, Newark received \$4,735,478 in State payments, and is anticipating \$4,228,873, for fiscal year 1979.

Housing Survey

ONS recently started a research project designed to assess changes in Newark's housing stock in the last five years and examine further changes that might be anticipated in the next five years, given existing construction plans. While it is generally conceded that most recent housing construction has been low and moderate income units, it is unclear what impact these units have had on the City's total housing stock.

Additionally, ONS is compiling a list of programs that are available to residential property owners for their use in upgrading their property.

The Newark Watershed Conservation and Development Corporation was established by the City in 1973, following the recommendations of an ONMS report on land use policy for Newark's 35,000-acre Watershed property. This non-profit Corporation is the City's planning and management agency for the property with responsibilities for: ensuring preservation of the land and protection of the water supply; guiding selective development to bring revenue

to the City; and planning for recreational, educational, and other uses of the Watershed by City residents. Its offices are at 605 Broad Street, Newark, 622-4521, and at the Pequannack Watershed.

The Newark Services Corporation was established in 1975 to operate a supported work program employing welfare recipients and former criminal offenders. It is part of national research and demonstration project involving thirteen cities. Planning for the Newark project was done by ONMS with the cooperation of the New Jersey Department of Institutions and Agencies. Funding is provided by an agency created by the Ford Foundation and several federal government departments. The Newark Services Corporation is located at 215 Central Avenue, Newark.

Project Resource is a paper recycling project which employs an ex-offender work force. The project operates under the Department of Engineering of the City of Newark and is funded by the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Initial planning was done by ONMS in conjunction with the City's High Impact Anti-Crime Program. Project Resource also operates at 215 Central Avenue, Newark,

The Mayor's Education Task Force was created following the Newark teachers strike in 1971 to bring together people in the community knowledgeable and concerned about education and to provide education staff to the Mayor. The Task Force worked on a wide range of education issues before disbanding in 1975.

Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, ONMS also worked closely with City officials during several years of negotiations with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey which led to an agreement in 1974 providing the City with a total of \$2.1 million in additional rent from the Airport and Port Newark for the period 1971-1975.

The Office of Newark Studies is unique in concept, design and function. It has provided vital services to the City of Newark for over eight years. The work performed is recognized as being of high quality and non-political. Through the use of a small number of professional staff, numerous student interns, and university faculty, DNS has effectively addressed a wide range of Newark's public sector concerns.

From February 1971 through June 1978, funding for this Office was consistently provided by three New Jersey foundations, the Florence and John Schumann Foundation, the Victoria Foundations, and the Wallace Eljabar Fund.